

THE  
DANGER  
OF A  
Total and Wilful NEGLECT  
Equal to the DANGER of an  
UNWORTHY RECEIVING  
OF THE  
**Lords Supper,**

WHEREIN

As is shewn the Nature and Danger of an  
Unworthy Receiving, so the great Folly  
and Sin of Neglecting it.

From those Words of *St. Paul,*

1 CORINTH. XI. xxix.

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By C. P. A. M.

L O N D O N,

Printed by J. A. for Tho. Parkhurst at the Bible  
and Three Crowns at the Lower End of  
Cheap-side near Mercer's Chappel, and are  
to be sold by Obed. Smith Bookseller at  
Daventry in Northamptonshire, 1693.

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TO THE  
READER.

**H**owever unnecessary this Ensuing Discourse may seem to be in the Judgment of some, by reason of those many excellent and full Discourses that have been already published concerning the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper, and which almost render it impossible to publish any thing New upon this Subject :

Yet I am not without some hopes of its doing Good, if not to those whose Circumstances will not permit them to buy and peruse the several Treatises that are now Extant concerning the Lords Supper ; yet to my own Parishioners, for whose sake it is chiefly published, and who indeed stand in need of Line upon Line, to bring them to a Practical Apprehension of the Obligation that lyeth upon Chri-

To the Reader.

stians to the Receiving of the Lords Supper,  
as well as to the worthy Approach thereof:  
And if in any Instance this Discourse may pro-  
cure the End for which it was design'd, and do  
good to them, or any Persons else; as I shall  
be thankful to God for it, so shall I look up-  
on it as no mean Reward, whatever Censures it  
meets with from others.

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Of the

Lord's Supper;

1 COR. XI. ch. 29. v.

For he that eateth and drinketh Unworthily,  
eateth and drinketh Damnation to himself,  
not discerning the Lord's Body.

**A**mongst other the Reasons that are urg'd  
for the Forbearance from the Sacrament  
of the Lords Supper, the sense of the  
greatness of the Ordinance, and the sad Sentence  
that is declar'd against Unworthy Receivers, is  
urg'd as a great Barr by some Men thereto.

Too many indeed are the Excuses that Men make for their not Coming to this Heavenly Feast; but that which is most prevalent with well-meaning People, is the Fears of their own Unfitness for it, and the Doubts that they never shall be Worthy.

Now for the satisfaction of such Men it is that I have made Choice of the Words of St. Paul, as the Subject of the following Discourse, and from them shall Treat of the following things.

1. What is here meant by Eating and Drinking Unworthily.
2. Upon what Account, and by what Ways Men receive the Sacrament of the Lords Supper Unworthily, or are Unworthy Communicants, and by what they are not.
3. In what Sense the Receiving of it Unworthily is so dangerous as it is said to be in the Text.
4. That although it be very Dangerous to receive the Sacrament of the Lords Supper Unworthily, yet the Total and Wilfull Neglect thereof is as dangerous; and that the not partaking of other Ordinances Worthily, makes Men liable to Damnation, as well as the not partaking of the Sacrament Worthily.
5. I shall Close all with an Exhortation.

1. Of the First, What is here Meant by Eating and Drinking Unworthily.

Now by Eating and Drinking Unworthily, not only the Words foregoing limit the Application of them to the Receiving of the Lord's Supper Unworthily, but the general Apprehension of Christians that they are to be so taken, do declare the same.

same. It's true indeed, that the Words are of our common Eating and Drinking, that whosoever Eateth or Drinketh Unworthily, that either abuseth God's good Creatures, or himselfe in an Unworthy or Intemperate Use of them, Eateth and Drinketh Damnation to himselfe, without Repentance, his Gluttony and Excess, as unthankfulness for God's good Creatures, being Sins that make him lyable to the Wrath of God.

But yet as all eating and drinking is not a receiving of a Sacrament; so not of that which is a Commemorative Ordinance of Christ's Body and Blood, being given and shed for us, for else we might say that Heathens or Infidels receive the Sacrament when they eat and drink: But as this is inconsistent with the Notions that men have of the Sacrament; so particularly with the scope of the Apostles words, which is concerning eating and drinking, according to the Institution of our Saviour, in remembrance of his Death and Passion, and agreeably hereto he tells, 1 Cor. 11. ch. v. 26. *That as oft as ye eat this Bread and drink this Cup, ye do shew the Lords Death till he comes; and in my Text, He that eateth and drinketh unworthily, eateth and drinketh damnation: But why? it follows, because he discerns not the Lords Body, of which he then Sacramentally partakes, as to the outward Symbols or Elements thereof.*

But why do I stand to shew, that by eating and drinking here, is meant the receiving of the Lord's Supper, and not common Eating at our ordinary Meals: Since tho' some prophane Persons to excuse themselves in their absence from this Ordinance pretend that they can receive the Sacrament as oft as they eat and drink; yet all sober Christians do apply the words of the Apostle to the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper, and their Doobis

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are not so much what is here meant by eating and drinking, as what the doing it so unworthily signifies, which is the next thing to be spoke to.

NOW, by Eating and Drinking unworthily, is not meant, a not deserving, or not being worthy to eat and drink what we do at the Lord's Supper, as Deserving, or being Worthy, signifies our desert or merit to partake of what we there partake; (for in this sense all are unworthy, yea even the Apostles were so; yea in that we come to this Ordinance to commemorate the Sufferings of Christ, as having laid down his Life for our Sins, we do hereby shew, That we of our selves are not worthy to receive so great a Favour, as the pardon of our Sins, and other benefits of his Sufferings, but only by his Merits: ) But tho we are not worthy in this sense, so as to deserve a partaking of what we there partake; yet such is the Goodness of God, that if we are but sincere in our preparations, in our Repentance, Thankfulness, and the like, as also in our Resolutions and Actions of Faith, Love and Obedience, God will accept of us as worthy in a Gospel sense, and bless his Ordinance unto us.

Such an Unworthiness then as the not deserving the Favours we then receive, is not the unworthiness spoken of in the Text, since there are none that are so worthy in themselves, no, not even St. Paul; and therefore I proceed to shew what is the unworthiness spoken of in this place.

Now by Eating and Drinking unworthily, I presume is meant, a performing the Duty of receiving the Lords Supper in ways unbecoming, unsuitable, or unfit to the Nature and Design of it, it is to receive it otherwise than we ought, or not agreeably to the worth of it, or the esteem we ought to bear to it. This I take to be the meaning of unworthily, and with this the *Corinthians* were charg'd,

and also suffer'd for, when they made no difference betwixt the Lord's Body, and their Common meals, but came to, and behaved themselves thereat disorderly, as you may see Verse 21 of this Chapter.

And so I pass over to the next thing I propos'd to treat of, *viz.* Upon what account, and by what ways men receive the Sacrament of the Lords Supper unworthily, or are unworthy Communicants. Now this they do, as they either come unprepared to, or behave themselves disorderly or unsuitably thereat.

And first, Men eat and drink unworthily at the Lord's Supper, when they come unprepared to it; and then are they said to be unprepared, when they come not with those Conditions or Qualifications which belong to him that is a Worthy Receiver, and so accordingly as men are wanting thereof, more or less, they may be said to be more or less unprepared, I shall therefore speak something concerning these Qualifications.

And first, One Qualification of a Worthy Receiver, or Communicant, is a competent knowledge of the Nature and End of this Ordinance, which if Men come to the Sacrament without, they eat and drink unworthily. Before People eat of this Bread, and drink of this Cup, they ought to examine themselves, 1 Cor. 11. 28. and as of other things, so of their Knowledge, what is to be done at the Sacrament: And if upon Enquiry they find they have not any Knowledge to distinguish it from other eating and drinking, when they do not discern the Lord's Body, they eat and drink unworthily, as it is in the Text: And how indeed can any Man do a thing worthily, that knows not what he doth, or why he doth it? And agreeable hereto are the words of the Learned Bishop *Taylor*, "That he that knows nothing of the Sacrament, nor  
"can

"can be taught any thing, must be permitted to  
"the Mercies of God, and the Prayers of the  
"Church, but he hath not to do with the Com-  
"munion. See Bp. Taylor's *Worthy Communicant*,  
Chap. 3. Sect. 3.

But as to this Qualification of a Competent  
Knowledge, there are but few but what do, or  
may come with it, if it be not their own faults;  
for he that hath but so much Learning as to be able  
to read the Bible, wherein the Institution and End  
of it are so clearly laid down; as also any of those  
Books about the Sacrament which are published  
amongst us, that either knows his Catechism, or ap-  
plies himself to the hearing of God's Word, and  
withall hath but the common Reason and Under-  
standing of a Man; it is his own fault if he doth not  
attain to some knowledge of that Ordinance. It is  
true, that all have not the like Knowledge, nor  
are they equally skill'd in the Mysteries of Faith;  
and as there is not alike Knowledge in all, so nei-  
ther is it requir'd it should be so, there being new-  
born Babes as well as grown Persons in Christ: So  
that if Men have but a competent knowledge, so  
much as makes them sensible of the Nature and  
End of this Duty, and what they are to do at, and  
after, as well as before it, their Knowledge shall  
be reckon'd sufficient.

Nay even amongst the less knowing, but sincere  
Christians, it many times happens, that tho' they  
cannot define the Notion of the Sacrament, nor  
talk so Learnedly about it as the *Learned Ones* do,  
they may yet be more worthy in God's sight, and  
more experimentally find out the sweetness of this  
Ordinance than the others: And tho' they can't  
dispute so much concerning the manner of Christ's  
presence as the great Casuists do, they may yet  
be in a closer Communion with him, and from the



use of Christ's Love display'd to them in this Ordinance, have their Hearts so enlarg'd that they can even dye for him.

But if after all, some are so ignorant in this Nation, and that wilfully too, in the midst of such preaching and Printing as we enjoy, That they know not what the receiving of the Sacrament means, and why it was ordain'd, I conclude they ought not to come ; or if they do, they come unworthily, because they discern not the Lords Body.

But Secondly, Another Qualification of a Worthy Receiver, ( without which if men come, they come unprepar'd, and so eat and drink unworthily ) is a real and hearty desire to the Ordinance and the Benefits of it ; for how can Men receive that worthily or suitably to the Nature and End thereof, that do not desire it ? He therefore that would not eat and drink unworthily, must also examine his desires ; doth he desire to have his sins pardoned, and Christ dwell in him ? Is he willing to take on him Christ's Nature, and to be one with him ? or is he glad to be in Covenant with God ? In short, doth he desire Christ upon the terms that Christ is propos'd ? If he doth, he is in a fair way of being a good Communicant, yea, he is one that is bidden and invited to come, *Isa.* ch. 1 v. But on the other hand, if a Man comes to it without any desire, or mind to it, and had rather not partake of it, ( was he left at his liberty ) not only from fear to stay away, or from worldly engagements to come, he frequents it, it is not to be thought that he will be a Worthy Receiver, because in such addresses a Man comes to it without a Heart, and so for want thereof his Devotion and Behaviour is like to be but lukewarm, if not cold or dead.

If

If indeed a Man comes to this Ordinance to encrease his Desires after it, if he comes not only upon the sense of his Duty to come, but out of hopes that by coming his Heart will be enlarg'd towards Christ, and he become more fit for this Ordinance: If he, I say, desires that he may desire Christ more, and is truly sorrowful that he is not more desirous, this shews the sincerity of his Heart in what he doth, and consequently that he is not unworthy in God's Merciful acceptance of what he doth, tho' he hath not those passionate heats, or free Enlargements of Soul as some have. But on the other hand, our coming to this Ordinance be a Burden to us, and we desire (if it may be) to be excused; but because we are not excused therefore only yield a formal and outward respect, we don't deal worthily by it when we eat and drink at Christ's Supper with no Appetite, and do as it were dislike, tho' we feed on the Elements thereof.

Thirdly, Another Qualification, without which if Men come, they are unprepar'd for the Sacrament, and so eat and drink unworthily, is Repentance, or a sincere Resolution of amendment. And truly they that come to this, or to any other Ordinance without Repentance, or Resolutions of Amendment, come unworthily; and accordingly God tells us of the Wicked, that their Sacrifice is an abomination to him, Prov. 15. 8. That his Face is set against them that do evil, that he will not hear their Prayers, Isa. 1. 13, 15. yea, all their actions of Devotion and Worship are loathsome in his sight, Isa. 66. ch. v. 3. And if so, you may imagine they are not in such Cases worthily perform'd when they are so hateful to God: and now, if the living in Sin marring the Duty, as well as hindering the blessing of other Ordinances, will it not

also render us unworthy Communicants: Surely if living in Sin makes us unworthy in Prayer, it will much more do so in the Sacrament, so that Repentance is a necessary Qualification for the Receiving of the Lord's Supper. As to Repentance, what it is, and how much it contains a change of Heart and practice; or at least a sincere endeavour to evidence our inward Change by our outward acts, so much as we have Opportunity and Ability, I think I need not stand now to shew, it being so oft treated of by others, and hath been so largely handled in my Parish, for the good of which this Discourse is primarily intended; but shall proceed to shew, how the want thereof in any man makes him an unworthy Communicant, for so long as he retains his Sins, he retains that which makes him an Enemy to Christ, and caus'd him to suffer; yea, that which dishonours not only him, but his Ordinance too, which is an Ordinance of Purity, and therefore to be receiv'd with Purity; and consequently if he doth not drive Christ away from his Ordinance, yet by his Sins he puts a stop to any Fellowship that he may expect with Christ hereby, there being no Communion with Light and Darkness, nor hath Christ and *Belial* any Concord, 2 Cor. 6. 14, 15. for to bring our Sins unburrow'd for before him, what is it else than to bring his Enemies before him, and own our Friendship with them, and consequently to affront him? And now we must needs think, that since they were the Sins of Men which made him suffer so much, he can't well bear the sight of them in his presence, and especially as allow'd by them, who for his sake as well as their own have such potent reasons eternally to hate and forsake them. In short, since the very end of this Ordinance is to commemorate Christ's dying for our Sins, and to con-

vey the benefit of his Blood, which was shed for the remission of them; it can't but be an unworthy return, to bring our Sins before him unrepented of.

But why do I stand to prove, that Repentance is a Qualification of a Worthy Communicant, since even Wicked Men themselves own that it is so, and therefore make some pretences to it before their approach to the Lord's Table, yea, the sense of their coming thereto shall put them into some good Moods, and faint resolutions of Amendment; nay it may be cause them to set a day or two apart beforehand, to bethink themselves to read some good Books, or with *Ahab* to go softly and look mournfully.

Yet after all, here lyes the tryal of our Preparation and Worthiness in this Point, whether our Resolutions be sincere, entire, or constant, and we are become new Men in Heart and practice too, as far as we have made tryal of our Change; whether our Sorrow for Sin is like to last longer than the Communion day, and we are like to be good after as well as before the Sacrament; for if we make never so good Resolutions, and spend a day or two before the Sacrament never so well in Religious Exercises, and yet when we have Communicated return to our old ways, if we find that the bent and inclination of our Soul is not alter'd, and our zeal against Sin is only Temporary and formal, we do not eat and drink worthily, but unworthily, and for all our outward Communicating, Christ may say of us as he did of *Judas*, *Behold, the hand of him that betrayeth me, is with me on the Table.* Luk. 22. 21.

Fourthly, Another Qualification of a Worthy Communicant, without which, if Men come to the Sacrament they are unprepar'd, and so eat and

drink

drink unworthily, is Charity : Now by Charity I mean not only a Love to God, but Love and forgiveness to Men.

And *First*, As Charity signifies a Love to God, that comes to the Sacrament-without it, cannot receive it worthily ; for how can a Man have such a due sense of Christ's Love in this Ordinance as he ought, and yet remain without Love to him? Nay, if he is sensible of Christ's Love, and will not Love him again, the more unworthy he, that will not do so much as the *Publicans*, who love those that love them, *Mat. 6. 46.* Yea very ungrateful, and so unworthy is he, that is going to receive the Pledges of Christ's Love, and that of his dying and greatest Love, (for greater Love hath no Man than to lay down his Life for his friends, except it be a laying of it down for his enemies, for this is Love beyond comparison, and yet such Love did Christ shew when he laid down his Life for Sinners ; ) *For a good man peradventure would even dare to dye : but God commanded his love to us, in that whilst we were Sinners, Christ dyed for us.* *Rom. 4. v. 7, 8.* And now when God hath so loved us, we cannot but be worthy to partake of his Love, if we will not love him that hath endured so much for our sakes.

In short, the very Sacrament it self is an Ordinance of Love ; it is a displaying of Christs incomparable Love in dying for Sinners under Sacramental Representations : If therefore we will not let our Love bear a part in the Solemnities thereof, we are unworthy of it, Love being not only a preparative Duty, but an Ornamental as well as Active Grace therein. But

*Secondly*, As Love to God is such a Qualification, without which, if Men come to the Sacrament,

ment, they come unprepar'd; and so eat and drink unworthily, so also is Charity and Forgiveness to Men: Now by Charity to Men, mean not only a forbearance of Revenge, but a doing of good to those that stand in need of it. And truly unless a Man can come in Charity, he comes but to his hurt; not that the want of Charity is an excuse for our Absence from this Ordinance, but a doubling of our guilt, in that we stay away upon so sinful account, but yet when we come without Charity, we come unsuitably to it, because this is an Ordinance of Charity — It is by this Ordinance that we are made Friends with God, and it is by this that we should be Friends one with another, that as we are Members of the same Body, so we become Members one of another, and consequently should not hurt or devour one another: What? when we feast on the Memorials of the greatest Love, when we are not only invited to be reconciled to God, but have such a Pattern of Love and Kindness before us in his dying even to save us, can we yet be Uncharitable and Cruel? One Man beareth hatred against another, and yet doth he seek for pardon from the Lord; if he that is but flesh nourisheth hatred, who will he treat for the pardon of his Sins? could even the Son of Sirac tell us long ago, *Ecclus. 28. v. 2, 3, 4*. But a greater than he hath told us, that we must first be reconciled to our Brother, in Affections at least, before we come with our Gift to the Altar. *Mat. 5. 23, 24, 25*. And again, if we forgive not Men their Trespases, neither will our heavenly Father forgive us ours, *Mat. 6. 15*. and many such Texts there are to the like purpose; nay, from the sense of Christ's dying Love, we find Christ exhorting his Disciples to the love of each other yea in keeping this Ordinance, St. Paul exhorts the

Corinthians

*Corinthians*, that they should not keep this Feast with the Leven of Malice, 1 *Cor.* 5. 8.

And now forgiveness and Charity, being so much requir'd at our hands, can we think to become Worthy Communicants without it? No: he who hates his Brother, whatever his hopes and pretences are, is but a Murderer, and ye know that no Murderer, till he repents, is a fit Guest for the holy and merciful Jesus; yea, St. *John* by way of Interrogation, implying a denial, asks How it can be, that the Love of God can dwell in him, who when he hath this World's goods, and seeth the needs of his Brother, yet shuts up his Bowels of Compassion from him? 1 *John* 3. 17. Nay if Christ declares, that such as will not give Meat to the Hungry, and Drink to the Thirsty, shall depart from him, and are not worthy of *Mat.* 25. v. 41. his presence, but fit only for the Devil and his Angels, it is hard to think how he will accept of the unmerciful and cruel Person, as a fit Guest at the Heavenly Feast, at this Ordinance of Forgiveness and Charity.

In short, a very wicked Servant is he, and no Friend of Christ's, who tho' he comes to entreat for the forgiveness of ten thousand Talents, doth at the same time keep a resolution of exacting the pence of his Brother; surely if the Love and Pity that is due to his Brother will not move him, the Consideration of what a Motive it is to his own Forgiveness from God, that he forgives others, should even make him more kind for his own as well as others sake, which if he is not, we must needs own, he is an unwelcome Guest, when he is of so contrary Behaviour to the Doctrine and Example of Christ, which to be of, as it is offensive to him at all times, so much more in the midst of the Memorials of his Love and Good will, as well

as Gods Forgiveness to us, through the Merits of his Son. Thus necessary is Forgiveness to make us worthy Communicants, as well as it is the Condition of God to us.

But now least Persons should mistake the Nature of Forgiveness, tho' few or none there are but what will own the Duty of it; before I leave this Qualification, I shall endeavour to shew you what is meant by Forgiveness, and what is requir'd of us thereby. As,

1. By Forgiveness, is not meant a bare Declaration thereof, or a praying to God to forgive those that have wronged us; but an actual forgiving, a doing what we say, and a Heartiness in our desires: Yea it contains the laying aside the thoughts of doing another Mischief, as well as the forbearance of a revengeful Act; for he that thinks and wishes ill to another, shews that he hath Malice in his Heart, tho he forbears to execute it. Yea, he that dares not do another a mischief, but yet desires God to be his Revenger, according to his Imaginations, doth in that shew, it is fear or something else, that restrains his hand, but his Heart is revengefull, and it shews that he would revenge if he might, and so cannot be said to forgive. But,

2. By Forgiveness is not only meant a forbearance of revenging an Injury, but a Forgetfulness of the Injury too, so far as to cease from revengefull thoughts or Expressions.

For he that remembers a wrong done him, so as to heighten his Passion under a new Provocation; he doth not heartily forgive, in that he keeps the seed of the past Anger and Passion still lurking within him.

It's true where a man hath done me wrong, I may remember it so far, as to take care to avoyd the

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the like or any other from him for the future; yet tho' by way of Caution and Prevention, a man may remember a past offence, the better to arm and defend himself; he is not so to remember it, as to make it an addition to his resolutions of Revenge, upon a second Offence; for indeed so to do, is not to put out the Fire, but only to cover it in Ashes. But,

3. By Forgiveness is not only meant, an act or state of Inoffensiveness towards others, a forbearance of revenging an Injury, and a forgetfulness of it so far as to cease from revengeful thoughts or Expressions; but also a readiness to shew actions of Civility and Kindness so far as they are due from us, even to those that trespass against us.

It's true indeed, I am not obliged to exercise those particular acts of Friendship with him, from whom I have received Injuries, and am still like to receive more, from the ill will and designs he hath against me; nor doth the Duty of Forgiveness exclude our Endeavours after satisfaction in a just and legal way: Yet so far doth Forgiveness require our Love and Kindness to Offenders against us, that they are not to be excluded our Prayers, or our Acts of Kindness to them as they are men, tho' we can't own them as Friends. Even to our worst Enemies we must do that Good that we would do to all men, as men; (that is) we must not only forbear to deal unjustly or cruelly with them, but shew them all the Kindness that God by the Gospel, and common Rules of Society and Civility hath made it our Duty to shew; and especially where there is no reason to the contrary, but we may do the same things for them as well as others; tho' they have offended us, we must not see them starve, nor perish for want of our Relief, for so the Apostle tells us: If even *thine Enemy hunger, feed him; if he thirst, give him drink; yea,*

where we may, we are to overcome his evil with our good, Rom. 12. 20, 21.

And thus I have shewn in several of the Qualifications of a worthy Receiver or Communicant, viz. 1. Knowledge of the Nature and End of the Sacrament of the Lords Supper. 2. A real and hearty desire to this Ordinance, and the Benefits of it. 3. Repentance or sincere Resolution of amendment. 4. Charity and Forgiveness: That if men come without them, they are unprepared for the Sacrament, and so eat and drink unworthily. And indeed besides these Qualifications of a worthy Communicant, there are others without which if we come to the Sacrament, we eat and drink unworthily; such as Faith and Thankfulness to our Saviour for the Pledges of his Love. But these being Graces that are chiefly exercised at the Lords Supper, I shall speak of them under the second way which I instanced, whereby men receive the Sacrament of the Lords Supper unworthily, viz.

2d. Way. When they behave themselves disorderly or unsuitably at it. Now men may be said to behave themselves disorderly or unsuitably, when they don't shew a due respect to what they are doing; but either allow their Hearts to hanker as well as their thoughts to wander after the World or Sin, or are prophane in their behaviour at it. Nay I may safely say, they don't deal with it very worthily, that either look upon their Receiving it to be little more, than a common or ordinary Eating or Drinking, or else undervalue the Bread and Wine, as but of little use and purpose.

It's true the Bread and Wine are but Creatures as our Church terms them, they are but Bread and Wine in their Nature, but yet as they are instituted by Christ, to be received in remembrance of his

Death and Passion, the taking of them according to Christ's Institution, is a Symbol, or Sacrament of our taking and eating the Body and Blood of Christ, and therefore as they are appointed by Christ, we are not to undervalue them, by thinking we may as well receive Christ and the benefits of the New Covenant without them as with them, when yet we have opportunity and invitations thereto, which indeed to undervalue, is not only to undervalue the Elements, but the Wisdom and Authority of the Instituter.

2. Those Men may be said to behave themselves disorderly and unsuitably at the Sacrament, and so receive it unworthily, that receive it without Faith: This Sacrament being such an Ordinance, that without Faith it cannot be received, and therefore it is the Apostles Advice, that we should draw nigh it with *full assurance of Faith*, Heb. 10. 22. for indeed Faith is not only the hand to lead us unto Christ, Heb. 11. 6, 7. but of applying Christ unto us, and making that which was done for many, Mat. 26. 28. to be effectually conveyed unto us, for what doth it signifie for me to Commemorate the sufferings of a dying Saviour by receiving Bread and Wine according to Christ's Appointment, If I have not Faith, that the benefits thereof belong to me, or cannot spiritually feed upon his Body and Blood by Faith, it being by Faith that we feed upon him? for as to the Corporeal eating of his Body and Blood, it is such a thing, that could the Papists quit their Avowance of, and yet keep up the Authority and pretended Infallibility of their Church, many Learned Men think they could easily part with their Opinion or Belief thereof: However, if it is the Doctrine of the Church of *Rome*, it is not the Doctrine of Christ, such being not only contrary to Sense and

Reason, but to Faith also; for as to Faith, we are told in *Heb. 11. v. 1.* *it is the Evidence of things not seen.* Now if Christ be Corporeally present, if the Bread that we eat be the very substantial Body of Christ, it is then seen, and so our Faith being an Evidence of what is seen, it is not the true Faith, in that it is contrary to the definition of it. Nay further, this Sacrament ceaseth to be a Sacrament, which is to be an outward and a Visible Sign of some Inward and Spiritual thing, if so be that after Consecration the Bread and Wine become the Body and Blood of Christ in a Corporeal sense, there then remaining no outward Sign or Sacrament.

But however, the Papists are so quick-sighted to see such a Corporeal Presence of our Saviour, it is more than we can, or more than I read that the Apostles saw in the Bread and Wine of which he speaks, when he saith, *This is my Body, this is my Blood*, when at the same time they saw his Body separate from the Bread he gave them, and they plainly discerned that when the Cup of Wine was given them, his Blood was not then shed.

It's true, That Faith sees that in the Sacrament which Reason doth not; but yet tho' Reason submits to Faith, yet Faith doth not put out our Senses from being Judges where they may, as they may be in discerning what is Flesh and Blood, and what is Bread and Wine.

But if any Man will say, that our Senses are not to be used in Matters of Faith, I think he speaks very rash, when even Christ appeal'd to the Senses of his Apostles to confirm their Belief of what he said, that he was the same Christ (tho risen again) that was Crucified, *Luk. 24. 39.* Since therefore the eating of Christ's Body and Blood, tho real, is Spiritual and Sacramental, it remains, that

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that what we see and taste of him at the Sacrament, is by Faith, which Faith considers not so much how the Elements feed the Body, as how the things represented, sealed and apply'd in this Ordinance, feed and nourish the Soul. And indeed it is by this, that we not only view him hanging upon the Cross, and shedding his Blood, but Feast our selves of him, that we may dwell in him, and he in us: If therefore we come without Faith, we are unworthy of this Ordinance, yea, we Evacuate it as to our selves.

But then here let us not be mistaken in our Notion of Faith, or think that a bare and true belief of Christ's Presence and Blessings in this Ordinance is the right Belief for it; No, but the Faith of a good Communicant is a Gospel Faith, such a Faith as receives Christ according to the Terms propos'd to us in the Gospel, and the Sacrament also.

Now that which is so, receives him not only as one shedding his Blood, and giving his Body to save Men from the Guilt and Punishment of Sin, but from Sin it self, it is such as receives him as a King to rule us, as well as pardon and save us; yea, it receives Christ's Body and Blood, that our Bodies may be made clean, and our Souls wash'd thereby, yea, in Christ Jesus the Faith that avails is a working Faith, it works by Love, *Gal. 5. 6.* and it works by Thankfulness too: And therefore in the third place,

3. Those Men may be said to behave themselves disorderly and unsuitably at the Sacrament, and so receive it unworthily, that receive it without Thankfulness. The very Business and Nature of it declares, that it is a Thankful Memorial of the dying Love of Christ, or a shewing forth of his Death, *1 Cor. 11. 26.* So that by no means can

they receive it worthily that do not receive it thankfully. And how indeed can we but be thankful, if we consider what we do and receive in this Ordinance; we feast upon the Memorials of his laying down his Life for Sinners, yea, for such Sinners as our selves, and that in our stead, to expiate for our Transgressions, and deliver us from the Wrath of God, and the sad Consequents of it; and now are we Worthy Remembrancers of his Love, when we are not thankful? Suppose we see a Man ready to starve, yea a Man ready to be overwhelm'd with the Waves of the Sea, and in each of these Cases receiving relief and Succour, wou'd not he (do ye think) be thankful? yea, unworthy would he be if he would not be thankful for such Blessings.

And now when we are call'd to Feast at this Heavenly Banquet upon this Bread from Heaven, and Food of Saints, yea, upon the Representatives and Seals of God's Eternal Love in Christ towards Sinners, that deserve, yea, that are ready to perish, shall not we be thankful? Nay, do but consider, who it was that hath done all this? What it was he suffered, and how much, and see whether we can Commemorate this his Love, and not be thankful? And truly if we can, without being so, it is a sign of a hard as well as ungrateful Heart, and is very unsuitable to the Nature and Design of this Ordinance, which is so much an Ordinance of Thanksgiving and Praise, that from thence it takes one of its Names, and is call'd the *Eucharist*, or Thanksgiving.

And thus have I at large shewn upon what Account, and by what ways Men receive the Sacrament of the Lords Supper unworthily, *viz.* when they come unprepar'd to, or behave themselves disorderly or unsuitably at it. And tho' indeed we can neither perform the preparatory Duties to,  
nor

nor the actual Duties in this Ordinance as we could wish; yet we are to labour after the attainment and performance thereof as well as we can, and be sorry for our failures therein, and if we do so, upon the benefit of the Sacraments, we need not distrust God's acceptance of us, as worthy thro' the Righteousness of Christ.

But on the other hand, if we do not come to the Sacrament in this sense, if we have no Knowledge of what we do, and why we come to the Sacrament; if we have no hungriings and thirstings after Christ, nor desires to this Ordinance; if we come without Repentance or sincere Resolutions of Amendment, and are without Love to God, or without Charity and readiness to forgive Men, when we at the same time do stand in need of, and beg God's forgiveness; if we do not believe in Christ, and are not thankful for what we Commemorate and receive, we come unworthily, and to no purpose.

It is the want of these preparatory and Ornamental Graces that makes us unworthy; but as for Receiving the Sacrament with others that are unworthy, or for receiving it Kneeling, it makes us not unworthy Guests at the Lord's Table, which brings me to the latter part of the second Head, viz. Upon what Account, and by what Ways Men do not receive the Sacrament of the Lords Supper unworthily.

Now amongst these I shall only in this Discourse insist upon two, and that the more largely, because they have been made by too many, the hindrances to the worthy receiving of the Lord's Supper, tho' in themselves no ways the Cause of an unworthy Receiving: And they are these, 1. The Receiving of it with unworthy Persons in a mixt Com-

Communion. 2. The Receiving of it in a Kneeling posture.

As to the first, The Receiving of the Sacrament with unworthy Persons in a mixt Communion, it is indeed much urg'd by some as a hindrance to a worthy receiving, but upon what reason I see not. If indeed my receiving of the Sacrament worthily depended upon others behaviour or unworthiness, then it concern'd me to take Care that I did not communicate with any that were unworthy; but now the terms of a worthy receiving are not so uncertain, but rather such as a private Communicant is to look after as to himself; but *let a Man examine himself, and so let him eat*, 1 Cor. 11. 28. As for others Examination of themselves, or their worthiness, they are to look to it upon their peril: And tho' a private Christian as well as the Church ought to admonish profane and careless Persons how they come, yet if notwithstanding his Admonition, nay, what is further, the Churches, they will venture to come, it doth not make him that is a worthy Communicant otherwise, hereby to become an unworthy Communicant: For indeed should this be so, not only the Apostles would have been unworthy Partakers of the Pascheover and Sacrament, (because a *Judas* was with them) but it may be most good Christians besides, that receive it in a publick Congregation, it being hard to say of the Members of any Congregation, that they are all so good, that there is no unworthy Member amongst them.

And now is this reasonable, that good Men worthy performance of this Duty should become Evil, because they receive with the unworthy when yet that they were unworthy, is not the Good Mens fault? It is indeed my Duty to fit myself as well as I can, and behave my self reverently



rently at it, but if another will come unprepar'd, be it to himself, tho' I deny not but I ought to be griev'd at the danger he runs himself into, and the scandal that he gives to others, yet as to the benefit of the Ordinance, his fault doth not make void God's Ordinance to me. And accordingly, tho' I can't say but we have many times unworthy Communicants amongst us; yet many Good Men in receiving of the Sacrament amongst us find benefit thereby to their Souls, tho' it may be at the same time they are sensible, that some that receive with them have not given such Evidences of their Repentance as might be wish'd.

Nor indeed are they the more unworthy for receiving it with them, because they do not thereby joyn with them in their Sins, but in this part of God's Worship, which being a publick Ordinance for the Church, all the Communion of the Worthy with the unworthy is only a joyning together in the performance of a Common Duty to which good People are oblig'd to come, and that worthily, tho' others do not, which if they do not, it is their fault, and not Good mens.

And sad indeed would it be, That after all our Care and Endeavours to adorn our selves to this Marriage-Feast, we should be forced to withdraw from it because there should come in one that had not on the Wedding Garment; but surely if he comes without it, it is his Fault, which tho' it renders him without excuse, it doth not therefore make it no Feast to others, nor is it an excuse to any to stay away upon his account, and thereby to neglect their Duty.

It's true indeed, that the Church should purge out the leaven from amongst them, (1 Cor. 5.13.) and put away from it notorious Offenders; and accordingly not only St. Paul, but our Church in her

her Rubrick before the Communion advertiseth,  
"That the Curate shall not suffer Persons to come  
"to the Lord's Table, in whom he perceiveth  
"Malice or Hatred to reign, untill he know them  
"to be reconciled; and that he is also to advertise,  
"That none presume to come to the Lord's Ta-  
"ble that are open ill Livers, whilst they are so;  
Yet if after all, either the Minister or the Church  
cannot for many Reasons keep up its Discipline,  
or what is worse to be suppos'd, do neglect it, yet  
this is not a making Worthy Communicants to re-  
ceive unworthily, the Sacrament still is a means  
of Grace to the Worthy partaker; so that as a  
famous Nonconformist declares, *That tho' Wicked  
and Prophane Persons pollute this Ordinance to them-  
selves, yet not to others, but he that believeth, eateth of  
the Bread of Life, John 6. 33. which shall be made  
good to the Believer, tho' there were but one in  
the World: See Hussey's Plea for Christian Magi-  
stracy, p. 2. And this he tells us Beza himself is in-  
forced to confess in his Tract against Erasmus; Bonis  
manere bona Sacramenta etiamsi qui mali ad eadem ac-  
cedunt, absit ut inficiemur: The Sacraments remain  
effectual to the Good, tho' Evil Men come to them,  
far be it from us to deny it; so that the Sacra-  
ment (saith he) remaineth holy to the Believers,  
and they are pure notwithstanding the unprepared-  
ness of the Wicked.*

And if it be not in the Power of the Ministers  
of the Sacraments to hinder the good Effect of  
Christ's Ordinance, or to diminish the Grace of  
God's Gifts from such as by Faith and rightly do  
receive them, which are effectual because of Christ's  
Institution and Promise, although they be mini-  
stred by evil Men, as our Church declares in her  
26th. Article: Much less is it in the Power of Fel-  
low Communicants, who are no more concern'd  
with

with our receiving it, than as they joyn with us in the outward performance of a common Duty.

And that we may be the more satisfi'd in this thing, let us but take the Instance of *Judas*, and we shall find it very hard to conclude, that the other eleven Apostles were unworthy Receivers, or that Christ ought not to have eaten the Passeeover with, or given the Sacrament to them, because *Judas* was with them: For however some Persons would seem to deny it, yet as it is plain that he was at the Passeeover, so at the receiving of the Lord's Supper, which will appear so, if we consider what the Evangelists say hereof. Thus in the 22<sup>d</sup>. *Luke* we shall find it not only declar'd, that when the Passeeover was ready, and the hour for it was come, *he sat down, and the twelve Apostles with him, V. 14.* but in the 19, 20, 21 Verses we are told, That *he took Bread, and gave thanks, and brake it amongst them, and gave unto them, saying, This is my Body which is given for you: Do this in remembrance of me. And likewise also the Cup after Supper, saying, This Cup is the New Testament in my Blood, which is shed for you: And then follows, But behold the hand of him that betrayeth me, is with me on the Table.* Now if *Judas* was the Person that betray'd Christ, which is not deny'd, it follows, that it was his hand that was with him on the Table; and if so, that then he was with Christ.

So likewise if we look into the 26<sup>th</sup>. of *St. Matthew's Gospel*, we find, that when *Even* was come, *he sat down with the twelve: And as they did eat, he saith, Verily one of you shall betray me, V. 20, 21.* And when *Judas* ask'd whether it was he that should do so, he not only gives a sign who it should be, but answers *Judas* it was he; *Thou sayst it, V. 23. 25.* and in the 26<sup>th</sup>. Verse, follows the Institution of the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper.

*And*

And as they were eating, Jesus took Bread, &c. and in the 27th. Verse, *He took the Cup and gave thanks, and gave it to them, saying, Drink ye all of it, for this is my Blood, &c. V. 28th.* The like I might shew from the Account given thereof by St. Mark, Ch. 14. from V. 17. to V. 25. That where Christ speaks of the Passeeover or Lord's Supper to his Disciples, it is not separately to the other eleven, but to the twelve.

Thus we see, that a Judas being amongst Communicants, did not hinder Christ from instituting, nor his Disciples from receiving the Lord's Supper, much less make them unworthy Communicants.

And tho' some, perhaps, may here assert, That Judas's Unworthiness was unknown, and that the Disciples did not know that he was the Person that should betray Christ, as appears by their question to Christ; *Is it I? Is it I?*

Yet I Answer, That supposing it was unknown to the Disciples till Christ told them, yet they must allow, that Christ knew very well beforehand who it was that was to betray him, and that Judas was the Person; and yet notwithstanding he was known to be so by Christ, yet this did not hinder Christ from Instituting it, nor did it hinder the other Apostles from being Worthy Communicants, tho' it is very probable that before they receiv'd the Sacrament, they knew or were satisfied, that Judas was the Person that was to betray Christ, from that sign which Christ

Mar. 26. gave them, that he who *dip't his hand with him*  
v. 23. *in the Dish, the same should betray him;* (Now the dipping of the hand in the Dish was at the Eating of the Passeeover, which was celebrated before the Lord's Supper, or the Institution of the Sacrament,) and therefore they might have avoided him thereat;

and but we don't find that they had any such demurrs,  
 banks, but they might as well receive it with Judas, as  
 or this Christ give it to him, and yet be Worthy Com-  
 shew municants.

Ch. Nay, let us come to the 11th. Chapter of the  
 speaks first Epistle to the *Corinthians*, wherein we have  
 Disci- the account of the danger of unworthy Receiving,  
 , but and we shall not yet find that others unworthiness  
 made the Good to become unworthy, tho' some  
 Com- of them were so unworthy as to be drunk at the  
 mting, Receiving of the Lords Supper, and so did eat  
 Sup- and drink unworthily; yet we don't read that St.  
 muni- Paul declares, that others that were not so as  
 they, were therefore unworthy, but rather de-  
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known Its true indeed from St. Paul's words, it is law-  
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 d that 7. 7. to the end; yea with a Brother that is a For-  
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 id not to eat: By which words, as we are not to hold in-  
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Eating Yet if after the Churches Admonitions, or what  
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*The Danger of a Total and Full*  
reasonable to think, that Judas his being with the other Disciples made them also unworthy; or that because an ill Man rushes upon this Ordinance, therefore a Good Man should go or stay away because of him, or else he must receive amiss, or that anothers Sin should make me omit my Duty, or turn it into Sin.

And as the Receiving of the Sacrament with Unworthy Persons in a mixt Communion doth not make Men receive unworthily, where the Receiving with them is not a complying with them in their sins, but a doing of our own Duty, and that upon the Command of Christ; so neither in the next place doth the receiving of the Sacrament in a Kneeling posture. Great indeed have been the Clamours of some People against this Posture, yea so unworthy hath it made Men (according to their Exclamations) that it renders them guilty of Idolatry, and makes them little less obnoxious to reproof than the Papists are for the Adoration of the Host.

But yet after all, the strength of their Arguments consists most in popular Noise. And as our Church hath sufficiently clear'd her self from the Charge of Idolatry, and the countenancing of Transubstantiation, so have its Members as sufficiently prov'd the Innocence of this posture of Kneeling.

And tho' indeed there needs little to be added to what they have written already, it being so clear and full, particularly in the Treatise, call'd *The Case of Kneeling at the Sacrament*, 1st. and 2d. Part: Yet it still continuing an Objection in the mouths of some against holding Communion with our Church, I beg leave to consider their Reasons why the Kneelling at the Sacrament makes Men

to receive it unworthily, amongst which I look upon these to be the chief.

1. That Kneeling is not the posture in which Christ gave, and his Apostles receiv'd it.

2. That Kneeling being a Posture of Worship and Adoration, it too much countenanceth the Adoration of the Host, and the Doctrine of Transubstantiation.

Now if these Objections will not hold good, then it will not appear from them, that Kneeling at the Sacrament makes Men to receive it unworthily.

To consider therefore their first Reason against Kneeling at the Sacrament, *viz.* That Kneeling is not the Posture in which Christ and his Apostles receiv'd it. To which I Answer: 1. That this is more than can be proved. 2. That if Kneeling was not the Posture in which Christ gave, and his Apostles receiv'd it, yet it doth not follow therefore that Kneeling is an unsuitable Posture, or makes Men receive the Sacrament unworthily.

As to the first, That this is more than can be prov'd, that Kneeling was not the Posture in which they receiv'd it, appears from hence, That the Posture in which they receiv'd it, is no where mentioned in Scripture. A plain Command we have to receive the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper in Scripture, but in what posture, whether standing, sitting or kneeling, it is not determin'd by Christ and his Apostles; and therefore as they are all postures in themselves lawful, so they are severally used according to the different Constitutions of Churches; some taking it in one posture, and some in another, the Gesture at it being but a matter of Circumstance, and not expressly Commanded, even in the Judgment of many Nonconformists.

As for what is urg'd, That it is probable, that Christ did give, and his Apostles did take the Sacrament in the same Posture as they did the Passover, and that was as they sate, it will not at all appear to be a proof: For tho' it be said, That *as they were eating, Jesus took Bread, and blessed it, &c.* Mat. 26. 26. and that the Custom of the Jews was in Christ's time to eat in a lying or leaning posture, (which was with them a Table posture, as sitting is with us;) and therefore in the 26th. Mat. v. 20. where it is said, *ὅψας γινώσκοντες ἀνέκειντο* *ὡς τῶν δώδεκα,* we render it, *when the Evening was come, he sat down with the twelve;* yet this is not because the word primarily signifies to sit, so that the Apostles sate as we do, but because that this being a Table posture with them, we express the word by ours.

But Secondly, Suppose that they did sit down sometimes at the Passover, as we do at our meals, yet it doth not appear by any Text that they remained in the same Posture; nay Learned Men tell us, [See *Lightfoot's Hora Hebrai*, in 26th. Mat. v. 20. *Case of Kneeling*, 1 part. p. 19. 22.] That it is amongst the Jewish Records, that Persons did not always keep the same posture in eating the Passover, but when they came to some particular Cups, and the Dish of bitter Herbs, they forbore the inclining or leaning posture: However, whether the Jews did keep always the same Posture or not at the Passover, it doth not appear by Scripture that Christ and his Apostles kept in the same Posture at the Sacrament as at the Passover, or that they did keep the same posture all the time of the Celebration of the Passover; it might be so, or it might not be so, for any thing that we read to the contrary, and therefore the Nonconformists do not so far assert the necessity of sitting

from



from our Saviours behaviour, but allow the taking of the Sacrament standing.

And so I proceed to the next thing which I propos'd to prove in answer to the first Reason, which is this : That if Kneeling was not the posture in which Christ gave, and the Apostles receiv'd the Sacrament, yet it doth not follow therefore, that Kneeling is an unsuitable posture, or makes Men to receive the Sacrament unworthily. And that first, Because all that Christ did is not binding to us, but where it is declar'd as binding, or is an illustration of some Rule, and consequently all the Gestures and Circumstances in our Saviours actings are not a Rule for ours ; for if they were, then in the Receiving of the Sacrament, we must take it leaning or lying down, as the posture of eating amongst the Jews then was, we must receive it in an upper Room, and with Men only, and that only after Supper, and the like.

But this is so absurd to maintain, that our Dissenting Brethren do own that it is not Obligatory, and that Gesture is not of the Freehold of this Ordinance. [See Mr. *Vines* on the Sacrament, and Mr. *Baxter* in his *Christian Directory*, part. 2. Quest. 3. Sect. 40. Chap. 24. p. 60.] Nay Christ's own Example (supposing that he gave, and his Disciples receiv'd of him the Sacrament in the same posture as he did the Passover) makes strongly for Kneeling, because in taking the Passover according to the Custom of the Jews, (which was sitting say our Brethren, but was leaning or lying along, say the words in the Original, and the Custom of the Countrey.) And in complying with the Gesture of the Jews then in use, he allow'd thereby the Authority of the Church in altering and determining of Gestures ; For it is plain, that however the Gesture at the Passover

was sitting or leaning, yet this was not the posture at first us'd and prescrib'd by *Moses, Exod. 2. ch.* The Gesture that was at first appointed, was with their Loyns girt, with their Shooes on their Feet in haste, with a Staff in their hands, which way of eating it being but a Temporary Law, after they were in *Canaan*, they kept it in the leaning posture, thereby to shew, that now they were free from the fears of *Egypt*, and therefore did not eat it in haste, but in a posture of Rest and Security : And now if Christ comply'd with the alteration of the posture to what it was at first, it shews, that in matters of Gesture undetermin'd by God, we ought to submit to the Customs and Usage of the Church wherein we live.

Nor doth it make Men the more unworthy Receivers of the Sacrament, that they Kneel at the Receiving of it, because as some say, the Sacrament is a Feast, and is call'd the Lord's Supper, and therefore ought to be receiv'd in a Table Gesture, which to be sure is not Kneeling ; for tho' it be a Feast (as it is indeed for the Souls of Men) it doth not therefore follow, that all things are to be done at it in a Feast way, for if so, then we may talk and laugh, or the like : But surely upon Consideration Men will be more wise than to assert, That because the Sacrament is call'd a Supper, or Feast, therefore the Circumstances of a Natural Feast, or Supper, are appropriate unto it.

And therefore some of our Brethren urge against this Argument themselves, (*viz.* That we must sit, because sitting is a Table Gesture at a Supper, or Feast, and is a Token of our Freedom and Fellowship with Christ,) That upon the same Reason (say they) we may as well put on our

Hats when we receive the Sacrament. See *Reformed Dissenter*, p. 6.

Nor indeed is Kneeling an unsuitable posture at the Sacrament, if we consider, That when we receive the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper, we receive it with a Prayer; nay, in Receiving of it we by sensible Signs do the Duties and Parts of Prayer; in receiving of it for the Remission of Sins, we thereby confess our selves Sinners, yea we implore the pardon of them upon the Merits of Christ's Sufferings: As also in receiving of Christ we do hereby shew, that we beg Grace and Assistance of God, it being of his fulness that we receive Grace for Grace, *John 1. 16.* The like I might shew in other parts of Prayer as we use them, *viz.* Intercession and Thanksgiving—yea further than this, that the receiving of the Sacrament contains a Virtual praying to, and giving Thanks to God. We that are Members of the Church of England, receive it with a Prayer, *viz.* *The Body of our Lord Jesus Christ which was given for thee, preserve thy Body and Soul unto Everlasting Life:* And then follows, *Take, eat, &c.* The like I might shew is done at the giving of the Cup.

And now if this be so, which is not to be deny'd, it follows, that Kneeling is not unsuitable to the Nature and Actions of this Ordinance, it being a fit and proper posture of Praise and Thanksgiving.

And if any Man thinks otherwise, let him but consider the practice of Heathens, yea of Dissenters in their Domestick Devotions; but if these will not bear weight with him, let him consider the practice of Christ, *St. Paul*, *St. Stephen*, and he'll find plain Instances of Kneeling in Prayer: yea do we but consider our Saviour in his Ag-

nies, which we Commemorate at the Sacrament, and we shall find that even then he did not reckon it unbecoming him to kneel at his Devotion, *Luke 22. 41.*

And now since that the principal parts of the Sacramental Actions on our part are Prayer, Praise, and the like, and that either verbally or virtually; and that Kneeling is agreeable to these great and Spiritual parts of it, it is so far from being unsuitable, that it is highly becoming this Ordinance, not only as it is a posture agreeable with the Nature and Use of Prayer and Praise, but as a posture of Worship to Christ, and as our Church expresseth it, A signification of an humble and grateful Acknowledgment of the Benefits of Christ therein given to all Worthy Receivers; which brings me to the Consideration of the second Reason, that some Men urge why the Kneeling at the Sacrament makes Men to receive it unworthily, *viz.* That Kneeling being a posture of Worship and Adoration, it too much countenanceth the Adoration of the Host, and the Doctrine of Transubstantiation. That we use Kneeling as a posture of Worship, is what we allow; but that thereby we countenance the Adoration of the Host, or the Doctrine of Transubstantiation, is a thing unreasonably laid to our Charge, considering not only what our Church declares in her Rubrick after the Communion Service, but with what solidity and strength of Argument they have Confuted the Abettors of such Doctrines as they are, and in a time when others that have exclaim'd against our Church for bending towards Popery, either durst not, or would not write against it.

Nor indeed are we to be blam'd for worshipping at this Ordinance, when by Faith we see Christ present with us, yea in as much as we pray

to and praise Christ, and celebrate his Goodness, we do therein Worship, (Prayer and Thanksgiving being actions of Worship) and that by the Confessions of our Dissenting Brethren, who allow that Christ may be Worship'd and Ador'd by Communicants in their Hearts. And now since Internal Worship belongs to Christ in this Ordinance, why may not we use an External sign of what we inwardly profess to do? Nay, if upon the sense of what we do and receive at the Sacrament, we may lift up our eyes and hands towards Heaven, and smite our Breasts, why may not we as well kneel at our Worship too? It being a convenient Gesture, such as was practis'd by Christ, and is even now by many good Men in their Worship. Surely Gesture is as lawful in one Circumstance as in another, and I may as well bow my Knees to the Father of the Lord Jesus, as bow my Head, or lift up my Eyes, a humble posture of Body being not unsuitable to an humble Mind.

Nor indeed doth kneeling at the Sacrament countenance the Adoration of the Host, or the Doctrine of Transubstantiation, because tho' we Worship at the Sacrament in this posture, yet we do not Worship the Sacrament, or make it the Object of our Worship, (as the Papists do) any more than the Dissenters themselves, when they pray to, and praise God at the receiving of the Sacrament: For if by expressing our inward Worship by this posture of outward Worship, we are therefore Adorers of the Host, it will follow that they too are guilty of the like Crime, for to Worship inwardly is Worshipping, as well as using an outward Gesture of Worship.

But as we do not Charge our Dissenting Brethren with this fault, so neither are we to be charg'd therewith, it being not the Elements that

are the Object of our inward or outward Worship, but that which is signify'd thereby; and it being our Duty in this Ordinance to be inwardly devout, humble and thankful, they are not therefore to find fault with Kneeling, which is but an outward Declaration of our inward Respect.

It's true indeed, that the Sacraments are Ordinances of Remembrance, the very End of their Institution is to do them in remembrance of Christ, 1 Cor. 11. 25. but because they are so, we are not therefore forbid to kneel at them more than at Prayer, which brings God into our remembrance: And tho' I deny not that we Worship before the Elements, yet this is no more Argument that we Worship them, than that the Children of *Israel* could be said to Worship the Ark or the Temple when they fell down in or before it. And we may as well say, that the *Jews* when they cry'd *Hosanna* to Christ riding upon an Ass, worship'd the Ass, as say that every Circumstance in Worship is the Object of it.

Nor is the Gesture of Kneeling the less unsuitable to this Ordinance, nor do we the more encourage the Adoration of the Host, tho' we use kneeling, allowing that the same Gesture is us'd by the Papists in their Adoration of the Host; for if so, we may as well be said to countenance them in their Worshipping of Saints, because we kneel at our Prayers to God as well as they do at their Prayers to Saints: What tho' the Papists kneel, must not we therefore? What tho' they say the Lord's Prayer, may not we? It is not because the Papists do such and such things that is a good Reason for our not doing them, because they do ill therein. Many People we see abuse themselves by Intemperate Eating or Drinking, but will it follow, therefore that we may not eat

or

or drink? And so the Papists, we deny not, are guilty of Idolatry and Superstition in the matter of the Sacrament as well as other things, must we therefore? By this Reason the *Jews* should not have sacrific'd or burnt Incense, because the *Athenians* used the same Rites: Nay, by this Argument, that the Papists kneeling at the Sacrament, and doing ill thereby, should make our kneeling at it to be sinful, we should be in a continual danger of losing that Liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free, the same being an Argument against sitting or standing, as well as kneeling at the Sacrament, shou'd they either stand or sit at it.

And indeed, however we are accus'd of favouring Popery, as upon other accounts, so for kneeling at the Sacrament, yet we don't find kneeling at the receiving of the Sacrament so much a tenet of the Church of *Rome*, as that none other is allow'd amongst them; for if you believe their *Missal* set out by Pope *Pius* the 5<sup>th</sup>, we are told, that the Priest, tho' at the Elevation of the Host, he is to kneel, yet at the Receiving of it is to stand, and accordingly it was so practis'd by the Popish Priests not long since in this Kingdom: Nay, as Learned Men have shewn, "The Pope himself not only us'd to sit at the receiving of the Sacrament, as in *Bonaventure's* time, but even now ordinarily he receives it leaning, and extraordinarily, or when he celebrates Mass himself, standing: See *Stillingfleet's Unreason. Separation*, p. 15. *Case of Kneeling*, pt. 2. pag. 38, 39. By which we see, that notwithstanding the Clamours of some Persons, the posture of Kneeling at the Sacrament is not so unsuitable to the Ordinance of the Sacrament, it being a posture that may be us'd without any Countenancing of the Adoration of the Host, or the Doctrine of Transubstantiation; the

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Abettors of which positions are such as allow of other postures besides kneeling, which are not therefore disallow'd by Dissenters because used by Papists, nor are they used by us as a countenancing of them: And now if kneeling amongst us be not used any ways to countenance the aforesaid Errors of the Papists, but is declar'd by the Church not to be so design'd or used, it can't make us guilty of unworthy Receiving.

And thus have I given an Answer to the chief Objections against Kneeling at the Sacrament; which Answer, tho' supported with a borrow'd strength from the Writings of several upon this Subject, as well as from its own force, yet is not therefore the less convincing, but may be of good use to prove, that by our kneeling at the Lord's Supper, if we have no other failures, we do not eat and drink unworthily, nor are we unworthy Communicants.

And thus have I at large shewn, Upon what Account, and by what Ways Men receive the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper unworthily, or are unworthy Communicants, and upon what they do not.

I come now in the next place to shew in what sense the receiving of it unworthily is so dangerous as it is said to be in the Text, which was the third thing that I propos'd to treat of from the words of the Text.

Now the words of the Text are: *For he that eateth and drinketh unworthily, eateth and drinketh Damnation to himself.* Damnation, a very terrible word, but much more terrible thing, as it is taken for Eternal Damnation, and could not be taken in another sense: But yet both in the Notion of it and the Application of it by *St. Paul*, it admits of

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another acceptation. The word in the Original is *Kelua* which coming from *Kelyu*, to judge or discern, signifies Judgment, discerning, or censuring, and accordingly in the Margents of many Bibles, it is put *Judgment*, by which is not only meant Eternal, but Temporal Judgment also; and that it may be so taken will appear the more, in that we find the word actively applyed unto Men.

Thus in the *7th. Mat. v. 2.* it is said of Men, *With what judgment ye judge, shall ye be judged.* The words in the Original are ἐν ᾧ ᾧ κελύματι κείνῳ, &c. Now it is it plain, that in this place it relates only to Temporal censuring, or Judgment, because it is not in the power of Men to inflict Eternal Judgment.

And as the word in the Original doth not carry with it universally such a dreadful signification as Eternal Damnation: So neither is it taken by *St. Paul* in this sense, for if we consider what follows these words of the Text, we shall find it primarily or chiefly relating to Temporal Judgments, for after he had shewn in this Chapter how the *Corinthians* had eaten unworthily the Lord's Supper, *v. 20, 21.* in the *27th.* and *29th.* Verses he shews them the danger of their actions, and that they may not think the danger of their Actions to consist only in words, in the *30th.* Verse he proves it to them from their own Experience; *That for this Cause* (to wit, their unworthy eating and drinking, or receiving of the Lord's Supper) *many were weak and sickly amongst them, and many were asleep:* He particularizes in the Judgments they had brought upon themselves thereby.

Now that these Judgments were not Eternal, not only the Instances thereof, but the words following do plainly declare, *That if they judg'd themselves, they should not be judged;* if they would cen-

censure this fault in themselves, they should not any more be so judged as they were in the 30th. Verse.

But when by not judging of our selves we put God upon judging, or in the Apostles words are judged, why then it follows, that *we are chastened of the Lord*, v. 32. How? not for ever, but that we shou'd not be condemn'd with the World: By which it appears, that the Judgments of God are so far from signifying Eternal, or everlasting damnation, that he proposeth it as an end of these Judgments to avoid being judg'd or condemn'd with the World.

Nay, so far is the word *Damnation* in the Text from being to be taken as signifying primarily, Eternal, that till Men are impenitent in their unworthy Receiving, we find *St. Paul* to be so far from consigning the *Corinthians* (tho' Unworthy Receivers) to Eternal Damnation, that he rather exhorts them, and that as Brethren, that when they met hereafter, they should amend this Fault: *Wherefore my Brethren, when ye come together to eat, tarry one for another; and if any man hunger, let him eat at home, that ye come not together unto Condemnation*, v. 33, 34.

Its true, That if a Man by his unworthy receiving of the Lord's Supper hath brought Temporal Judgments upon himself, and is not thereby wrought to Repentance; or if he persists habitually in unworthy approaches to, or behaviour at this Ordinance, he doth not only bring himself in danger of greater Temporal Judgments, but Eternal also: And so indeed not only any Person that receives the Lords Supper unworthily, but he that prays, reads or hears unworthily, doth so too.

In short, the Damnation that a Man incurs in this Case, is but as that which he brings upon him-

himself by other Sins, for which every Man shall be damn'd, unless he Repent, or sincerely desires and endeavours so to do; but if he doth Repent of this as well as other Sins, he is not in a state of Damnation, tho' he hath formerly receiv'd unworthily— And tho' Damnation may be the portion of an unworthy Receiver not repenting, yet it may be also the portion of him that lives in a Total and Wilful Neglect of this Ordinance, as well as of him that receives it unworthily; which brings me to the next Head I propos'd to treat of from the words of the Text, which was this:

*4th. Head.* That tho' it be very dangerous to receive the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper unworthily, yet the Total and Wilful Neglect thereof is as dangerous: And that the not partaking of other Ordinances worthily, makes men lyable to Damnation as well as the not partaking of this Sacrament worthily: And that because it is as necessary a Duty to come to the Sacrament, as it is not to come unworthily to it, to which tho' we can't come as we should, we are yet to come as we can, as I shall shew in the close of this Discourse.

For however there may be greater Excuse and Allowance to a Man that stays away for fear, than there is to a Man that comes unworthily to the Sacrament, at the first Apprehension; yet if the Man that stays away out of fear doth not use his best Endeavours to remove that fear, and fit himself for it, he is as inexcuseable as the other. For a Man to say, I will not receive the Sacrament lest I should receive it unworthily, and yet not to strive after preparation, or fitness in a Gospel sense, nor to inform himself when he is fit, is but little better than for a Man to say he will not be a Christian, because if he should live ill, it would

would be worse with him than if he had not been a Christian: *He that knoweth his Masters Will, and will not do it, shall indeed be beaten with many stripes*; but he that will not know it when he may, because he would not fall into greater Condemnation, doth not therefore make his Case the better, but the worse, in that he Evacuates to himself one means of avoiding Condemnation, *viz.* the Knowledge of that will which directs him to avoid it.

The like is it with a Man that wilfully forbears the Sacrament, that so as he thinks he may escape the danger of unworthy Receiving, which tho' he avoids the danger of, yet he doth not avoid the danger of an Unworthy and *wilful* Neglect; which however men don't so much consider of as they ought, is none of the least, as I shall shew presently: For let a Man be never so Cautious lest he receive unworthily, if he makes not his fears an Argument for greater Care in his Preparations and Endeavours to fit himself, his Fear, tho' it is not joyn'd with something of Contempt, yet at best carries with it a great deal of Superstition, or undue Fear of God, and shews there is many times too much Carelesness of Spirit in Matters of so great Consequence as the receiving of the Sacrament is.

So that whatsoever allowable Excuses there may be for our Absence from it at some particular times, yet there are none for his *Carelesness*, who lives in a total and wilful Neglect thereof, where it may not only be had, but Instructions also as to the Rules and Necessity of Receiving it: And that because as it is our Duty and Interest not to receive it unworthily; so is there a plain Command for the Receiving it, which nothing can excuse the *total* and *wilful* breach of.

But that we may not think this Assertion purely begg'd, viz. That the total and wilful Neglect of Receiving the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper, is as dangerous as the Receiving of it Unworthily : I proceed to prove it in these following Instances: 1. In regard of the unworthy dealing with Christ. 2. With the Sacrament it self.

*First*, If we consider the unworthy dealing with Christ, by a total and wilful Neglect of the Sacrament. And well indeed may we call it so, when by so doing we live in a total and wilful Neglect of his dying Command.

Now that Christ hath Commanded us to receive the Sacrament, I think is so clear, that to question it, would be to question the Institution of our Saviour, of which we have so full an account in several of the Evangelists, and which is confirm'd to us by St. Paul in 11 Chapter of his first Epistle to the *Corinthians*. And now when we have so plain a Command, do not we deal very unworthily by him, when tho' we call him *Lord*, *Lord*, yet we do not the things he saith? Luke 6. 46.

But *Secondly*, Well may we say that a total and wilful Neglect of this Ordinance, is an unworthy dealing with Christ, if we consider how ungrateful dealing it is with him also. I suppose none pretend to be true Christians, or pretend to stay away from this Ordinance out of fear that they shall not be fit for it, but what have some sence of the Nature and Design of this Ordinance, that it is instituted as a Memorial of Chrst's Sufferings for us, and the Benefits thereof: And now how unworthily do we deal with him? Tho' we hope to be sav'd by the Merits of his Sufferings, yet we wilfully neglect to celebrate the Memorials of them, or do so much in remembrance of him,

as *thankfully* to shew forth his Death till he comes, in ways of his own appointment.

But perhaps here some may say, *That we can think of Christ's Love to Men in suffering for them, without coming to this Ordinance.*

To which I Answer, I don't say but they may, but yet not so acceptably with God, so long as they live in the neglect of this appointed way of Remembrance; because Christ hath appointed this as the great Memorial, and therefore may well take it ill when Men neglect his Way and Time of Remembrance, and stick only to their own, which if they could remember his Love as acceptably in, as in that which he hath appointed, why did he appoint such an Ordinance for this end? Certainly we ought not to think any thing impertinent, or of little use and acceptance which he hath Com-manded, much less that which indeed is the great Ordinance of conveying the pardon of Sin, and confirming our Interest in Christ.

Surely if any Man under the Law shou'd plead for his Neglect of Sacrificing, tho' God commanded Sacrifices, that he could pray to God well enough, tho' he offer'd up no Sacrifice, such an Excuse or Plea would not have been allow'd, but would have been reckon'd as a Virtual despising of Sacrifices as unnecessary, and consequently wou'd have been very dangerous; for so it is said, that *he that despis'd Moses his Law, dyed without mercy*, Heb. 10. 28.

And now since Christ hath not only done so much for us, but hath left it in Charge at his Death, that we should *Take and Eat*, yea that we should *all Drink* in remembrance of him, and we look upon this Charge as necessary to be observ'd by us; can we think he will not take it ill at our hands, and punish us for our Neglect, unless we repent?

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Yea saith the Apostle, *See that ye refuse not him that speaketh; for if they escaped not who refus'd him that spake on Earth, much more shall not we escape, if we turn away from him who speaketh from Heaven,* Heb. 12. 25.

But Secondly, It will appear, that a *total and wilful Neglect* of the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper, is as dangerous as the receiving it unworthily, in regard of the unworthy dealing there is thereby with the Sacrament it self: For by a *total and wilful Neglect* of this Ordinance, we either shew that we do not reckon it a necessary Ordinance, which yet is the most solemn Ordinance in the Christian Worship, (that is, a Memorial of his great Love, and a shewing forth of his Death till he comes:) Or else we make it (to use the word) a Bugbear, or more dreadful than it is, and so deal unworthily by it, when we act as if it was such an Ordinance that was a greater occasion of Offence or Ruine than any other; in that we suppose it as one, that is less possible to be done worthily as to God's acceptance than any other; which to suppose, is not only to have ungracious Thoughts of it, but is a reflecting upon the Goodness as well as Wisdom of Christ, who hath order'd this as a means for our Salvation, if we are but sincere, as indeed we ought, as well as pretend to be, in other Ordinances.

I am apt to think, that many of these Men who stay away altogether from this Ordinance, for fear, as they say, least if they come to it they should come unworthily, are yet apt to hope, that (notwithstanding their unfitness to receive the Sacrament) if they should happen to dye, they shall receive the things signify'd by the Sacrament, viz. The pardon of their Sins, and Reconciliation

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And now if these Persons notwithstanding their unworthiness for the Receiving of the Sacrament, do yet trust in God's Mercy for the receiving of the things signify'd and exhibited in the Sacrament, why may they not also trust God's Mercy for the receiving of the sign? If they trust to receive the benefits of Christ's Merits, why should they distrust the Institutions for that end: Nay, if any of these Persons should lie upon a Death-bed, upon asking I suppose they would be ready to assert their hopes of Salvation through the Merits of Christ, tho they were unworthy of it: and now are not Men that are sincere in what they say, as fit to receive the Sacrament as they are fit to Dye? Yea surely, if they are not fit to receive the Sacrament, they are not fit to dye, or receive the pardon of their Sins; for indeed I cannot find where God is said to be more merciful to Men at their Death than at the Sacrament, it being very easily to be believed, that he who will pardon us when we come to dye, will pardon us also when we prepare our selves as well as we can to receive the Sacrament; it being as easie also to think, that those whom God will receive as fit for Heaven, he will receive also as fit for his Ordinances upon Earth: and therefore Persons deal very unworthily with this, when they represent it as more dreadful than it is.

But *Thirdly*, It will appear, that a *total* and *wilful* Neglect of the Sacrament of the Lords Supper, is as dangerous as the Receiving it unworthily, if we consider, that the being without those preparatory and Ornamental Graces which should make us receive worthily, doth as well expose



us to the Danger of Damnation, when we do not receive the Sacrament, as when we do receive it : If a Man hath the Qualifications of a Worthy Communicant, he is fit to receive ; but if he hath them not, whether he receives the Sacrament or no, he is in a miserable estate.

Thus for Instance, if a Man is without Repentance, whether he comes to the Sacrament or not, he is like to perish, *Luke 13. 3.* or if he doth not believe, he is like to be damned, *John 3. 18.* nay, he is condemned already ; or if a Man knows not Christ, *he hath no Eternal Life abiding in him*, *John 17. 3.* or if he is not in Charity, he is a Murderer, and no Murderer, *St. John* tells us, *hath Eternal life abiding in him ; 1 John 3. 15.* or if he forgives not men their Trespases, *neither will his Heavenly Father forgive him ; Ch. 6. v. 15.* yea he that hath no desires after Christ, nor Love to him, can't be happy in Christ, nor by him ; or if he is not thankful to God for his Love in Christ, he is unworthy of it, whether he receives the Sacrament or not.

Nor is it an Argument that Men are the freer from Damnation, because so long as they do not come to the Sacrament, they do not make a Sacramental Vow or Covenant to Live well ; for tho' they never come to the Sacrament, they are yet oblig'd to live as well as they can ; there is a Natural Obligation upon them to obey God in all his Commands, from which they are not discharg'd, because they do not receive the Sacrament : For suppose Men never make any verbal or formal Covenant, it is not to be suppos'd that God loseth the least right to the utmost of their service, or that he will the sooner dispense with them, because they will not accept of another tye to serve him.

conciliation with God thro' the Merits of Christs Sufferings.

And now if these Persons notwithstanding their unworthiness for the Receiving of the Sacrament, do yet trust in God's Mercy for the receiving of the things signify'd and exhibited in the Sacrament, why may they not also trust God's Mercy for the receiving of the sign? If they trust to receive the benefits of Christ's Merits, why should they distrust the Institutions for that end: Nay, if any of these Persons should lie upon a Death-bed, upon asking I suppose they would be ready to assert their hopes of Salvation through the Merits of Christ, tho they were unworthy of it: and now are not Men that are sincere in what they say, as fit to receive the Sacrament as they are fit to Dye? Yea surely, if they are not fit to receive the Sacrament, they are not fit to dye, or receive the pardon of their Sins; for indeed I cannot find where God is said to be more merciful to Men at their Death than at the Sacrament, it being very easily to be believed, that he who will pardon us when we come to dye, will pardon us also when we prepare our selves as well as we can to receive the Sacrament; it being as easie also to think, that those whom God will receive as fit for Heaven, he will receive also as fit for his Ordinances upon Earth: and therefore Persons deal very unworthily with this, when they represent it as more dreadful than it is.

But *Thirdly*, It will appear, that a *total* and *willful* Neglect of the Sacrament of the Lords Supper, is as dangerous as the Receiving it unworthily, if we consider, that the being without those preparatory and Ornamental Graces which should make us receive worthily, doth as well expose

us to the Danger of Damnation, when we do not receive the Sacrament, as when we do receive it : If a Man hath the Qualifications of a Worthy Communicant, he is fit to receive ; but if he hath them not, whether he receives the Sacrament or no, he is in a miserable estate.

Thus for Instance, if a Man is without Repentance, whether he comes to the Sacrament or not, he is like to perish, *Luke 13. 3.* or if he doth not believe, he is like to be damned, *John 3. 18.* nay, he is condemned already ; or if a Man knows not Christ, *he hath no Eternal Life abiding in him, John 17. 3.* or if he is not in Charity, he is a Murderer, and no Murderer, *St. John* tells us, *hath Eternal life abiding in him ; 1 John 3. 15.* or if he forgives not men their Trespases, *neither will his Heavenly Father forgive him ; Ch. 6. v. 15.* yea he that hath no desires after Christ, nor Love to him, can't be happy in Christ, nor by him ; or if he is not thankful to God for his Love in Christ, he is unworthy of it, whether he receives the Sacrament or not.

Nor is it an Argument that Men are the freer from Damnation, because so long as they do not come to the Sacrament, they do not make a Sacramental Vow or Covenant to Live well ; for tho' they never come to the Sacrament, they are yet oblig'd to live as well as they can ; there is a Natural Obligation upon them to obey God in all his Commands, from which they are not discharged, because they do not receive the Sacrament : For suppose Men never make any verbal or formal Covenant, it is not to be suppos'd that God loseth the least right to the utmost of their service, or that he will the sooner dispense with them, because they will not accept of another tye to serve him.

Its true indeed, that he who receives the Sacrament, doth thereby lay a further tye upon himself, and makes the bond double; but yet this doth not make Holiness the less binding to one that doth not receive, the Natural Right that God hath to it being an indissoluble bond to man to practise it.

Nay, he that will not receive the Sacrament because he will not make an actual Engagement to Live better, is more inexcusable in some Respects than one that makes and breaks it; for he makes one sin a reason for another, and shews an unwillingness to be oblig'd to God's Service so far as he may: But the other tho' he breaks his Tye, yet by tying himself, declares that he owns it as his Duty to be so ty'd, and that he ought to live up to it: So that to neglect the Receiving of the Sacrament, and that wilfully too, to avoid the danger of unworthy Receiving, is but at best running into one danger to avoid another.

But *Fourthly*, It will appear that a total and wilful Neglect of receiving the Sacrament of the Lords Supper, is as dangerous as the receiving it unworthily, because those things which make us unworthy Receivers are no Excuse for a total and wilful Absence from, or Neglect of the Lord's Supper.

Now that which makes Men unworthy Receivers, I told you, is not only Sin, but either want of Knowledge, or of Desires to Christ; the want also of Charity, Repentance, Faith, Devotion, Thankfulness, and the like: The want then of these things being so ill as to make Men unworthy Receivers, the Question is, Whether the want of these is a just excuse for a *total and wilful* Neglect of this Duty. Now the want of these being  
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so ill, I answer, That it can't be an Excuse for the Neglect of our Duty; for one Sin cannot be an Excuse for another, as will appear, if we consider some of those particular Qualifications for this Duty, the want of which makes men unworthy Receivers when they come to it: As first, if we consider the Knowledge of Christ and this Ordinance, the want of which is rather matter of shame than an Excuse for staying away, in that we are ignorant in the midst of such means and helps to Knowledge. Nay, should Christ ask a Man, Why dost not thou come to the Sacrament? And he answers, Because I don't know thee, nor it: would this Excuse be taken? No, rather it would incense Christ the more, that he should plead his own Neglects as an Excuse for Sin, and pretend the want of that to defend him, when 'tis his own Sin and Fault that he wants it.

And so in the want of Desires after Christ, and his Ordinances, it will be no Excuse for not coming thereto, that we had no desire to them or him, but rather an aggravation of our Fault not to desire him, and therefore to stay away from him.

The like I might shew under the want of Repentance; that to neglect coming to the Sacrament because we don't repent, is to make that which is an Instance of our sad Estate, a Reason for neglecting a Means of Salvation; yea it is to urge our Folly, and the danger of our Condition as a reason for not coming to the Ordinance of Pardon, which tho' we don't come to, yet we ought to perform the other, because it is that which we must necessarily perform, (if we would be saved) whether we receive the Sacrament or not; and therefore if we don't repent, the more inexcuseable are we, when tho' God Commands it,

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and we have such need of it, we yet neglect it. The want therefore of that which is necessary in order to save us, can't be a good Excuse for neglecting the means of Salvation; so that if we come without Repentance to the Sacrament, we come unworthily; but the more unexcuseable are we when we do not repent, seeing it is so necessary, whether we come to the Sacrament, or not.

Nay even under the want of Charity, it is no Excuse for not communicating, to say, we are not in Charity; for if we are not, what can we say for our selves why we are not? We are commanded to be in Charity, and there is reason for it, whether we receive the Sacrament or not; nay, if we are not yet, the more reason have we to be so for the future, and so come to this Ordinance of Charity to have the pardon of our past Uncharitableness seal'd unto us.

By these and the like Instances we see, That the want of the Qualifications of a Worthy Communicant is no Excuse for our not receiving the Sacrament, any further than one Sin is an Excuse for another, or the breaking of one Command is an Apology for the violation of another. The want indeed of doing our Duty in some Instances, may render us unfit for it in others; but it is no Excuse for doing ill in one thing, that we have not done well in another, nor is one Fault a just plea for another: For if it should be so, it would not only exempt Men from Receiving the Sacrament, but many other Duties of publick Worship, and we may as well excuse our selves for not Praying at all, as not Receiving at all; because when we are without the Qualifications of Faith, Repentance, &c. we are as unfit to pray



as to receive the Sacrament; which brings me to the latter part of the fourth Head, *Viz.* That the not partaking of other Ordinances worthily, makes men lyable to Damnation, as well as the not partaking of the Sacrament worthily. Thus for instance: To pray is an Ordinance of the Gospel, as well as a Duty, by Natural Religion, and yet to pray unworthily doth not only provoke God not to hear our Prayers, *Psal.* 66. 18. but is an abomination to him, *Prov.* 15. 8. and what is an Abomination to God, I think I need not prove, that it deserves his Condemnation.

Nay, As to come without Repentance to the Lord's Supper, so to pray without it is exceeding dangerous, because such Men that pray as well as receive without it give God the Lye, and pray in Hypocrisie; nay, without it a Man is an unworthy performer of any Duty, and is always lyable to Damnation, *Luke* 13. 3.

The like I might shew in the matter of Faith, That if a Man prays without Faith, he no more prayeth aright than he receives aright without it, *James* 1. 6. Nay even in the matter of Charity it is as unworthy dealing with God, and with the Duty of Prayer, to ask the Forgiveness of our Sins upon the merits of Christ's sufferings, whilst we do not forgive men their Trespases, as it is to desire it under the Commemoration of his Sufferings with the same Uncharitableness; for by begging of Forgiveness by vertue of them in Prayer, we do Commemorate it by words, as in the Sacrament we do it by Signs and visible Representations.

And indeed both in the Sacrament and in Prayer, to ask for Forgiveness whilst we are uncharitable, is but to provoke God, and in both we play

the Hypocrite with God, whilst we plead Christs Sufferings for the removal of the punishment, before we have left the Sin.

And as in the Instance of Prayer, so under the Ordinance of Hearing, I might shew you that the unworthy performance thereof renders men liable to Damnation ; for thus we are told, that unless the Word of God be regarded, and have a worthy or due respect, it is but a savour of Death ; 2 Cor. 2. 16. it will rise up in Judgment against us, and by it we shall be Condemned, John 12. 48.

And yet notwithstanding the great Danger of Praying or Hearing unworthily, the very Persons that pretend the fears of Unworthiness in Receiving of the Sacrament for the Neglect thereof, can by their Actions shew, that they may be fit enough for Reading, Hearing, and Praying ; and they reckon that through the Mercy of God, and the Merits of Christ, they may have reason to hope for a favourable acceptance of their Devotion.

Well now, we may venture upon Prayer to God, and therein to implore the pardon of our Sins upon the Merits of Christs sufferings : Nay, should we blame any Person for a total Neglect of Prayer, (See *Case of Doubting Conscience*, p. 38.) notwithstanding there is danger in Praying unworthily ? And may not we venture too upon the Sacrament ? Are not we as worthy to receive the Sacramental Blessings as we are to receive the Pardon of Sin, or other Blessings desir'd in Prayer ? Surely if thro' Mercy we are fit to pray to God, as Christians are to be fit, we are fit to receive his Sacrament : If indeed we do not know what is signify'd when we Commemorate Christs Dying Love in the Sacrament ; if we have no Desires

fires after Christ ; if we have not Charity, and are without Faith, and are not thankful for God's Love to us in Christ, we are not fit to receive, nor to pray as Christians do ; for as we state the Notion and Duty of Prayer to Christians, it is as requisite that we know what we desire, or have apprehensions thereof, that we pray in Faith and in Charity, that we have desires after Christ, when we beg an Interest in him, and Forgiveness thro' him, or the like, as when we beg the pardon of our Sins at the Sacrament ; yea when in Prayer we pray to God for pardon for Christ's sake, we are suppos'd then to Commemorate his Merits in words, ( as in the Sacrament we do by signs ) tho' a Commemoration in words is not enough always, because he whose Merits we Commemorate hath oblig'd us so to do, by signs as well as in words.

So that if we are sincere in our words or Prayers, and we hope that we can put up Prayers in such a way as God will pardon the defects thereof, and accept of them through the Vertue of Christ's Merits and Intercession ; I can't see but those that are worthy in God's Acceptance to pray as Christians ought to pray, *viz.* in the Name and through the Mediation of Jesus Christ, are also worthy in the same sense to perform other Religious Duties, and that God is willing to accept of their sincere Endeavours to Worship him in the Sacrament as well as in Prayer, and especially when he hath Commanded us to receive his Sacraments, as well as to pray to him upon the Merits of his Sufferings, when we are of Age and Understanding so to do.

In short, He that is a good Christian, is fit to be a Communicant, and he that is not so, is as unfit

unfit to pray as to Communicate. If we live in Sin, we can neither worthily pray nor receive, but whatever Ordinance we meddle with, our sins debarr us the benefit thereof, as well as provoke God therein; and we can no more be accepted of without Charity in Prayer, than in the Sacrament. But on the other hand, if we are sincere Christians, and would serve God in all the parts of his Worship and Service as well as we can, and are sorry for our failures, we are not only of the number of them whose Prayers God will be pleas'd to hear, but if we receive the Sacrament may experimentally feel thereby our Growth in Grace, and in the Knowledge of our Lord Jesus. Whereas on the other hand, to all the forementioned Dangers of a total and wilful Neglect of the Lords Supper, there is also this, that by a total and wilful neglect thereof, we may bring our selves to a disuse of other Ordinances also, and not only bring upon our selves a Carelesness of Spirit in matters of (especially instituted) Religion, but fall into a careless and loose way of Living too.

Its true indeed, that neither the Neglect of Praying, of Hearing and Reading God's Word, nor an ill Life, necessarily follow the total Neglect of the Lords Supper, yet should I say, that the Looseness of the present Age, and the visible Decay of Piety amongst us, is in some measure owing to the great Neglect, and little sense that too many have of the necessity and Excellency of this Ordinance, I believe I should hardly be disproved: For tho' it will not be allow'd, that the oftner Men receive the Lord's Supper, the more Holy they are, and the less they sin; yet since in the receiving of this Ordinance we Commemorate the Sufferings of Christ for Sin, (and so thereby are made

made sensible what an Evil and hateful thing it is in God's sight, when even nothing could expiate for it but the Blood of Christ the Son of God,) as also are suppos'd to renew our Covenant with God, that we will live better for the future; we can't but own that the Sacrament of the Lords Supper is a great Argument if not means against Sinning.

And this not only those who upon the sense of their approach hereto, make some formal and temporary shews of Repentance and Promises to do better, do thereby declare, that it is an Argument to leave off Sin, but even those Persons that Wilfully neglect to receive it, because they are loth to leave their Sins, ( which they think they are oblig'd to do, if they should receive this Sacrament ) I say, upon this their Reason of Forbearance, do they even own, that the receiving of it is an Argument and Obligation against Sinning.

If therefore the Receiving of the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper be so great an Argument and Obligation against Sin, it follows, that the more wilfully we choose to live in the neglect of one, the lesser help we have against the other, and so may the more easily be brought thereto.

I do not deny after all, that Persons who live in a frequent partaking of the Communion, may yet live as loosely as many that live in the Neglect of this Ordinance; but then this is as true, that those who receive this Sacrament, have one Argument and Means more against Sinning which the other have not; yea the thing being equally consider'd, ( not to mention those Temporary Acts of Devotion as well as Forbearance from Sin, which many ( if not most ) Men are apt to have before

before and upon a Communion day, as also the real Change which God is pleas'd to work many times upon some men by their attendance upon this Ordinance) I say, the thing being equally considered, those that come to the Communion out of a sense of Christ's Command, and their Duty so to do, are in a more probable way of leaving their Sins, than those are who live in a total and wilful Neglect of it, (especially if the Love to Sin be the Foundation of their Neglect;) and the Reason is this, because the one sort hath one means and help more against Sin (if we will allow that God's Ordinances are so) than the other.

And accordingly I do not find but that many Persons who frequent this Ordinance, live as unblameably as those that abstain from it; and if they do not, they are the more inexcusable in their Sins, and that because the more frequently they come to it, the further Tye and Obligation do they lay upon themselves to abstain from Sin.

And now perhaps may some desire to be inform'd what they shall do in this Case: We are sure (say they) if we come to the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper, that we are unworthy; and if we come not, or especially live in a total Neglect thereof, and don't endeavour to fit our selves, we are as unworthy and in as dangerous a Condition. To whom I Answer, that they are neither to live in a *total* and *wilful* Neglect thereof, nor yet to come unworthily, but to make themselves ready, and then they may, yea then they ought to come. If any of us remain in Ignorance or in Sin, and do not endeavour to know or live better; the truth is, we are not worthy Communicants if we  
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come to, nor are we safe if we stay from this Ordinance; there is danger both ways, it being no Excuse for not receiving, that we live in Ignorance or Sin when we have Means and Calls to do better, and therefore ought to accept and make use thereof: And indeed, to live in Ignorance or Sin under Means and Calls to do better, is that which is unjustifiable in all People, and such a state as for their Souls good they ought (so far as they have opportunity and Ability) to be free from; it being the Duty of all that pretend to Christianity, at least to know God and his Son Jesus Christ, as also to be Regenerate; which if they do, or are, they are not to reckon themselves unworthy; for such Christ invites and receives, and to those that he thus deals with, we are not to deny his Sacraments, nor reckon them unfit for them: And such indeed are all good Christians, viz. Persons invited by him, and these are the Persons that I am now perswading to come to the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper, and not to stay away by reason of their doubts and fears of their own Unworthiness, and so unfitness for so Sacred an Ordinance.

For as to Wicked Mens Doubts of their Unfitness, a great deal of reason there is for them, whilst they remain so; to such the Sacrament is no more than it was to *Judas*, till God is pleas'd to work a Change upon them; such must believe and repent, and then they may come, but not till then; and if they do, it is upon their own peril.

It is therefore to the Conscientious Person that in the close of this Discourse I am going to speak to: To one that fears, and waiteth upon God in his other other Ordinances, but only is hindred by

*The Danger of a Total and Willful*  
by some unhappy Doubts, (unhappy I call them, that hinder a Christian from so necessary, so comfortable an Ordinance) if such an one saith he is unworthy for it: I answer, it is more than he knows, or more than Christ hath told him; and till Christ denies a Man his Fellowship, he ought not to debar himself of it.

But why art thou unworthy, Oh sincere Soul, of this Ordinance more than thou art of Prayer? Thou doubt'st not to make Prayers, and implore the pardon of thy Sins upon the merits of Christ's Sufferings, why should'st thou doubt then thankfully to Commemorate these sufferings in the great Ordinance of their Remembrance? Surely if thou art permitted to offer up thy Prayers upon the Merits of Christ's Sufferings, thou may'st as well be permitted to offer them up upon the Memorial thereof; if thou hast but the Knowledge of the Nature and End of the Sacrament; if thou desirest Christ, and the Ways of Communion with him; if thou art in Charity with God and the World, and endeavour'st to live well; if thou believest, and art thankful, who forbids thee the Sacrament? Doth the Gospel, or Christ? or doth his Church? No Verily: For pity sake therefore don't make thy self more unworthy than thou art: Don't Complement away the blessing of this Ordinance, by pretending thy unfitness, so long as thou lead'st the Life of a Christian: Do but try, and come with the Qualifications afore-mention'd, or with a sincere endeavour so to do, and then tell me whether Christ will cast thee out. Nay, if thou hopest to be pardoned by Christ, to be saved by the Benefits of his Passion, thou need'st not to fear that which he hath appointed as the great means of conveyance of such Benefits to Believers,

nor



nor need'st thou dread the Ordinance of Christ, when thou stedfastly believest thy Interest in him; for if thou art worthy in Christ's sight to partake of the Redemption purchas'd by him, thou may'st depend upon it, thou art not to be debarr'd the Seals thereof.

Ay, but may some still urge, That tho' they come with the Qualifications aforesaid, tho' they sincerely seek to prepare themselves, yet still they find themselves, or at least judge themselves unworthy of this Ordinance; because when they do come to it, they find that as they have many times unwilling dulnesses and distractions of Spirit in this as well as other Duties, so at best they are wanting in those transports and extraordinary Acts of Joy and Complacency both at, and after the Sacrament, which they many times discern, or believe to be in others.

To whom I Answer, That the want thereof doth not make Men Unworthy Communicants, it being not necessary that all Christians should be so enliven'd, God neither having made a Promise, nor commanded it as a Duty, that all Communicants should be so endowed.

I do not deny but God may give sometimes to some Persons these Extraordinary Impulses and Consolation; and I do believe that many there are who are able to speak great things of their Faith in, and Communion with Christ; yea, such Complacency as well as Extraordinary Acts of Love and Adoration do they shew therein, that one would imagine that their Souls were carry'd up to Heaven, and that with St. Stephen, they were not only viewing their Saviour by Faith in Figure and Sacrament, but by personal sight, yea by their Gestures and by their Words, which most sweetly

sweetly set forth Christ's Love to them, and theirs to Christ, we may be apt to believe, that if they had not been in Heaven, yet they minded nothing else, and were going up to be for ever with the Lord.

But however we may admire this in others, we are not to judge those as unworthy, that can't reach thereto; for if we should so judge, we should not only condemn a great part of the Generation of God's Children, but shou'd cast a stumbling-block before them, and render their Case worse than it is: For as the saving Influences and Operations of God's Spirit may be where there wants these Extraordinary Impulses and Consolations, so a Man may receive the Sacrament to very good purposes without them, there being many good Men that by Means of the blessings of the Sacrament are strengthen'd more in the Spirit, that are more confirm'd in their Faith, in their Love to Christ, and hearty desire of Thankfulness and Obedience, that yet do not arrive to those passionate heats and flights as others do.

I think I need not tell you, that with many, if not most good Christians, it is in Holy Duties as it was with the Disciples of Christ in the time of his Agony: tho' their *Spirits* may be willing to serve and adore Christ in the highest manner, yet *their flesh is weak*; Mat. 26. 40, 41. and tho' they don't allow themselves therein, yet they find themselves apt to start aside, or tyre when their Hearts are lifted up to God; and they can hardly watch and pray one hour, but something or other, either from themselves, or the presence of some Worldly Object, is apt to give some diversion or distraction to them in their most solemn Acts of Devotion and Worship.

And

And yet after all, these very Persons may not only have an high esteem of Christ, and a real Love to him and his Service, but would be glad that they could serve him better: And now is it to be suppos'd, that God will judge them unworthy, who serve him in Sincerity of Heart, and are sorry that they can't Worship him so much as they shou'd? No surely, Christ that bore with the Infirmities of his Disciples, that knows our Frame and Constitution, that remembers we are but Men, will not be extream to mark what we unwillingly do amiss, but *as a Father pitieth his Children, so doth he pity them that fear him; Psal. 103. 13.* that set their Hearts to wait upon their Saviour in Ways of his own Appointment, tho' they can't Worship him in that perfect and cheerful way as some do, sincerity of Heart going a great way to God's Acceptance of our Endeavours, as well as to the pardon of our unwilling, and repented of Infirmities.

And indeed herein is matter of Comfort, that God accepts of men according to the sincerity of their Hearts and Endeavours, rather than by the Tyde or heat of Mens Affections, which is higher in some than in others, even upon Natural as well as Religious Agitations; nay, is higher in the same men at one time, than at another: And therefore, tho' we can't approach to, or come away from the Sacrament with those passionate Transports of Love and Consolation as some Men do, or as we could wish; yet if what we want is sensible Joys, we make up in Truth and Reality, let us not distrust but God will have Compassion on us, and deal with us according to what we would, and endeavour to be, and not by what we are, *viz.* Persons of Infirmities. If indeed we were Angels, God might expect the service of

*The Danger of a Form and Vnright*  
Angels from us ; but as he knows we are but Men, so he requires no more than the service of Men, who do they what they can, have their Infirmities and Failures sometimes, and whose Flesh hath its weakneses, be their Spirits never so willing.

And tho' indeed where God gives it to Men to be fill'd with such Extraordinary Consolation, and Efforts of Devotion, they are not to hinder or restrain the flowings thereof ; yet where God is not pleas'd to bestow them, as Men ought not to murmur against God, so not to condemn themselves as unworthy, because they are without them. These being Arbitrarious Gifts, which God giveth as he seeth good, and therefore it being not for us to choose our places and parts at this Heavenly Feast, we may reckon it sufficient for us that he gives us his Cup to drink, and that we are qualify'd and enabled to partake thereof with the sincerity of a Christian, and other necessary Qualifications.

If therefore, I say, out of a sense of our Duty to God, we come to the Sacrament, and endeavour to prepare our selves for, and behave our selves at it according to the best of our Capacities and Opportunities, and are sorry for our failures, we are not to stay away from it, though we cannot thereby satisfy all the Desires of our Souls, to be and do as others, God making it our Duty to receive, and that as well as we can, but not to forbear it, because we attain not to those sensible Joys and Exaltations of Spirit, as God for Reasons known to himself may impart to others, it being enough for us to make us Communicants, and that with his Blessing too, when he bestows upon us the Graces of his Spirit, and enables us live as Christians.

But

But yet, if after all I have said in this Matter, the Good, the Religious Soul is yet afraid of the Sacrament, I must leave him to the Grace and Mercy of God ; which tho' I do not deny him in his Absence from the Lord's Supper, yet I must tell him, that his fear hinders him the enjoyment of a very comfortable Ordinance to Pious Souls : Nay, his fear ( if it is only a snare to keep him from coming to, but doth not put him upon a serious and hearty endeavour of fitting him for this Duty, as well as seeking for Advice how to remove such fear ) doth give too shrewd a sign of his decay in Grace. However, let his fears be as unwilling as can be suppos'd, yet they hinder him of an Ordinance, which is not only a great Means and Reason for living better, when to all other Helps he hath that of the Sacrament, but also of that which is a publick Memorial of Christ's Love to Sinners, and is the Communion of the very Body and Blood of Christ, 1Cor. 10. 16. as also a Means of encreasing our Union and sweet Intercourses with Christ.

And thus have I done with the several things that I propos'd to be treated of from the words of the Text, and in the close thereof shewn, that the saying we are unworthy of the Sacrament, doth not make us unworthy ; nor are we to stay away as unworthy, because we do not arrive to those Transports, or Extraordinary Acts of Joy and Complacency, both at, and after the Sacrament, which we discern or believe to be in others, if so be we are sincere, and conscientiously endeavour to do what is requir'd of us.

Yea of the whole Discourse this is the sum, That tho' it be very dangerous to receive the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper unworthily, upon those Accounts, or by those Ways that Men may

be said to receive it unworthily, in that so to do, makes us lyable to Damnation, both Temporal and Eternal, without Repentance, yet a *total* and *wilful* Neglect thereof is a dealing with it as unworthily, which Christians should fear so to Neglect, as well as to receive unworthily.

And now what remains, but that I conclude with a word or two to my Parishioners, for whose sake chiefly I have publish'd this Discourse: You have heard of the benefits of the Ordinance of the Lord's Supper by my Mouth, and have been told thereof in God's Word, and therefore cannot say it is in vain to come to it: You have heard, that Christ commands the receiving of it as a Duty, and therefore can't say it is unnecessary: You have heard what are the Qualifications, even no other but what are necessary to make your Prayers accepted, and prove your selves to be good Christians: And now since you hope you are Christians, and hope for Pardon and Salvation by Christ, why should you be afraid of a Christian Duty? Or to partake of that which is the means or Seal of Pardon? Nay, why should ye be unwilling, as I fear too many amongst you are, not so much because ye may not receive, but because ye will not prepare your selves for it?

And now if after all the frequent Exhortations to prepare your selves, and to come to this Ordinance, you yet live in a total and wilful Neglect of so Sacred and so useful an Ordinance, you can't say, if evil befalls you for this Neglect, that your persisting therein hath been occasion'd by my Negligence in warning you: For as I call Heaven and Earth to witness, so I appeal to your selves, whether I have not admonish'd you of the illness and danger of a *total* and *wilful* Neglect, as well as of an unworthy Receiving of the Lord's Supper.

But

But, Oh Blessed Jesus, thou that givest us such  
Spiritual Food, give us at length right Appetites  
to it ; Thou that hast Instituted this Ordinance,  
fit us also for it, Create in our Hearts such Holy  
Desires to thee, that we may be glad of such op-  
portunities of Union and Communion with thee ;  
till from enjoying thee in thy Ordinances, we  
are made Eternally worthy by thee to enjoy thy  
presence and the Blessings thereof in Heaven ;  
which that we may all be, God of his Infinite  
Mercy grant to us all, through the Merits of Christ  
Jesus. To whom, &c.

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*FINIS.*

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